

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 18, 2011

Agenda Item: Beaver Creek Access Public Land Easement

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorse Course of Action

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

FWP proposes to purchase a permanent road easement across private land to provide public access to land owned and administered by the Ashland Ranger District of the Custer National Forest (U.S. Forest Service) in Powder River County. The proposed easement is located on an existing two-track road that extends from the Beaver Creek County Road about 23 miles east and north of Ashland. The easement crosses one-half mile of private land before connecting to an existing developed road network on the national forest. The road easement will provide year-round access to the national forest for public recreation and for all other legal uses of the national forest land. FWP further proposes to purchase the easement and to transfer the road easement, or administrative authority for the road easement, to the U. S. Forest Service.

Public Involvement Process & Results

An EA and subsequent public involvement is presently under development, pending FWP Commission endorsement.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposed Action: FWP proposes to purchase permanent road easement, from a willing landowner, across private land to provide year round permanent public access to a large block (19+ sections) of the Custer National Forest. FWP would secure permanent public access to this land for hunting as well as hiking, camping wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreational activities.

No Action alternative: FWP would forgo the opportunity to purchase a needed access easement. There would be no guarantee of public access to Forest service property from the Beaver Creek Road. Should the property sell or the landowner have a change in management public access would be lost or severely curtailed.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends approval by the FWP Commission to proceed with the road access easement development, negotiation and purchase with a willing landowner. This project will provide public road access in perpetuity to 19 sections of public land in the Custer National Forest.

Proposed Motion

I move the FWP Commission endorse the recommendation to begin negotiations for a permanent public access road easement to provide public access to the Ashland District of the Custer National Forest.